

Multi Focal Lens: Integrating Inclusion and Equity into Planning

**A partnership project between the City of Ottawa and
City for All Women Initiative / Initiative : une ville pour toutes les femmes**

Purpose:

Enable City of Ottawa to operate in a manner that embraces the spirit of equity and inclusion in the development and implementation of policies, programs and services.

Background:

“Cities are playing a bigger role in the lives of citizens than ever before as a result of demographic changes and downloading of responsibilities by senior levels of government, and the effects of globalization. Inclusive cities contribute to the quality of life of individuals and improve the health of the population by reducing social and economic distances between people; valuing diversity and recognizing people’s lived experiences; and ensuring that all members of the community participate as equally valued and respected citizens...”
(Inclusive Cities Canada, 2005).

In order to be inclusive, a city must make a firm commitment to equity and value diversity. The changing demographics of the City of Ottawa speak to the growing need to address the issue of social inclusion at the local level. With 35,000 Aboriginal peoples living in the National Capital Region, Ottawa has the fastest growing urban Aboriginal population in Canada. Between 1986 and 2001, Ottawa received 85,930 immigrants. By 2017, immigrants will account for 27% of Ottawa’s population, and 28% of the population will be visible minorities. With the creation of the City of Ottawa, a large rural population became part of the city. At the same time, there is need to increase the inclusion of other groups who risk exclusion: persons with disabilities, women, francophones, youth, seniors, low-income people, GLBT community and persons living in rural areas.

Since 2005, City for All Women Initiative (CAWI), a partnership between women from diverse communities, academics and the City of Ottawa, has coordinated a strategy which partnered women from underrepresented diverse communities and the City of Ottawa to develop and implement a [Gender Equality Lens](#). The guide poses questions for employees to consider in all aspects of City business. The evaluation of the guide pilot revealed that using the guide resulted in concrete changes to planning and program development. In some cases, using the lens enabled staff to more effectively consider differences and inequalities between women and men; while in other cases, it enabled staff to consider differences and inequalities among women. In order to systematically consider the full diversity of women and men, it was recognized that a more in-depth understanding of the full range of equity and inclusion issues was needed.

City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)

Initiative: une ville pour toutes les femmes (IVTF), May 28, 2008

During this same period, City Council approved the creation of an [Accessibility Lens](#) and Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee proposed the creation of a Equity and Diversity Lens. Realizing the complexity of working with multiple lenses, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) of the City of Ottawa decided to build upon the learning of the Gender Equality Lens to develop a multi focal lens that will integrate the equity and inclusion concerns of 11 groups most affected by social exclusion in the community of Ottawa. These 11 groups are: the five equity groups identified in the **City of Ottawa's Equity and Diversity Policy** – Aboriginal persons, women, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and GLBT individuals, as well as six additional groups who experience exclusion: recent immigrants, francophones, youth, seniors, low-income people and those living in rural areas.

Scope of the Work:

The multi focal lens (exact name to be determined) will take the form of a planning tool that will pose questions and provide information on the specific issues of each of the groups, while directing the user of the tool to other sources for more in-depth information. The tool along with training and an implementation strategy will be a step forward in strengthening the capacity of city staff and managers to develop a cultural competency for equitable inclusion. Additional training in specific areas will be necessary in order to further develop this competency.

As directed by EMC, Steve Fynamore, Deputy City Manager, Business Transformation Services Department will take the lead on this project. Lois Emburg from Human Rights and Employment Equity will represent management in overseeing the project and liaise with all City Departments in the development and implementation of the Lens.

From June 2008 – June 2009, the project will be coordinated by CAWI staff with the added expertise of community leaders and consultants in the specific equity-inclusion areas. CAWI will draw upon the research of best practices in equality and inclusion planning and the expertise of a reference group to develop the multi focal lens planning tool. The reference group will be comprised of city staff and subject matter experts who bring knowledge and expertise on planning, inclusion and equity as it relates to the 11 groups. There will be regular consultations with and reporting to the related Advisory Committees (EDAC, AAC, PIAC, French Language Services, Seniors, Rural Issues) and the Aboriginal Working Group. Focus groups will be held with City staff and community groups to review the guide, test it and identify best practices.

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